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Letters, Notes, And Answers To Correspondents

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## LETTERS, NOTES, AND ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE CURRENT WEEK'S JOURNAL SHOULD REACH THE OFFICE NOT LATER THAN MIDDAY POST ON WEDNESDAY. TELEGRAMS CAN BE RECEIVED ON THURSDAY MORNING.

COMMUNICATIONS respecting Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, 429, Strand, W.C., London; those concerning business matters, non-delivery of the JOURNAL, etc., should be addressed to the Manager, at the Office, 429, Strand, W.C., London.

IN order to avoid delay, it is particularly requested that all letters on the editorial business of the JOURNAL be addressed to the Editor at the Office of the JOURNAL and not to his private house.

AUTHORS desiring reprints of their articles published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are requested to communicate beforehand with the Manager, 429, Strand, W.C.

CORRESPONDENTS who wish notice to be taken of their communications should authenticate them with their names—of course not necessarily for publication.

CORRESPONDENTS not answered are requested to look to the Notices to Correspondents of the following week.

MANUSCRIPTS FORWARDED TO THE OFFICE OF THIS JOURNAL CANNOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE RETURNED.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.—We shall be much obliged to Medical Officers of Health if they will, on forwarding their Annual and other Reports, favour us with *duplicate copies*.

Queries, answers, and communications relating to subjects to which special departments of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are devoted will be found under their respective headings.

### QUERIES.

JUVENAL asks where in London a Russian bath can be had.

GALEN writes: A lady, the subject of slight inguinal hernia (right), with some weakness of the left inguinal region, and wearing a truss, falls pregnant. Will the continued wearing of the truss do any damage, or should anything in the form of an abdominal belt be used instead? What special precautions should be taken at the time of the confinement?

### FROTHY URINE.

W. P. M.B., writes: Is it right to conclude from "frothy urine" that a patient is suffering from albuminuria? Can it not be produced by a "corkscrew stream"?

\*.\* The persistence of froth on the surface of urine for some time after it has been passed or agitated does not prove the presence of albuminuria. All that it indicates is that the frothy urine contains some ingredient which gives it the power of forming bubbles. The commonest substances which impart this power are albumen and bile. If there is no tendency to jaundice in the patient frothy urine probably indicates the presence of some albuminous substance in the urine, and this may be derived either from the kidneys or the genito-urinary passages. A "corkscrew stream" may increase frothing by causing greater agitation of the urine during its passage, but will not make any permanent frothing unless some abnormal ingredient is present in the urine.

### ANSWERS.

J. D. R.—It scarcely lies within our province to give information about fly-fishing.

### CLIMATE FOR A CONSUMPTIVE IN AUSTRALIA.

DR. W. T. GARDNER (Bournemouth) writes: I can strongly recommend "F.R.C.S.E." to send his friend to Coomabarabrou. All information can be obtained from Dr. Failes, who resides there, and has benefited very greatly from the place.

### THE CLIMATE OF BLOMFFONTEIN.

A.—Blomfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, South Africa, lies about 4,000 feet above sea level, with some shelter to the north in the open veldt country. It is as well supplied with the requirements for invalids as any South African health station, and has been the scene of several recoveries from phthisis in the early stage. Limited tuberculosis of the lungs does well there.

### INEBRIETY "CURES."

DRINK.—The alleged "cure" to which our correspondent refers is secret, and therefore unworthy the patronage of honourable members of the profession. Moreover, it has been the subject of legal proceedings in a British colony, where a fine was imposed. There are a large number of similar secret "cures," all of which are stated by their proprietors to have cured all, or nearly all, of the cases treated. We strongly advise our correspondent to have nothing to do with these "cures."

### NOTES, LETTERS, Etc.

ERRATUM.—In Sir Charles Cameron's address on public health, published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of August 11th, the death-rates from typhoid fever in different classes of society (p. 301) should have been per 100,000 instead of 1,000.

MRS. MARIAN MARSHALL and assistant were present at the British Medical Association meeting at Bristol for the purpose of copying papers, etc., on the Remington typewriter, as in previous years, and the new Greek typewriter in use at her office in Cambridge was on view, creating much interest among members.

### THE "VONDA" LADIES' SYRINGE.

\*.\* We feel indebted to our correspondent "M.D." for calling our attention to the suggested use of the "Vonda" ladies' syringe that appears in a printed circular issued, we assume, by the manufacturers thereof. From a purely professional point of view we commented on the syringe in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of August 19th, 1893, but this, with other like notices, has been unwarrantably used to promote its sale. Among the various advantages—seven in number—claimed for it is that "(7) By using this syringe at the proper time a lady has complete control over her person, and can, if necessary, influence its state." Comment on such a suggestion is superfluous. We have referred the matter to the solicitor of the Association, with instructions to communicate with the persons responsible for the issue of the advertisement, requiring the publication of the commendatory notice to be discontinued, as we decline to allow our review of the article to be in any way associated with the suggestion conveyed in the above extract.

### THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND ITS WORK.

DURING the past few days, says the *Morning* of August 8th, the papers read at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association have added more to the public stock of knowledge and done more to promote the welfare of the masses than the deliberations of Parliament for a twelvemonth. Take, for example, small-pox and influenza, and the mode of propagation of these diseases. Has any deliverance from either of the front benches since the election of the present Parliament equalled in practical importance what Dr. Priestley and Sir T. Grainger Stewart have had to tell us upon these subjects? Which is the more fraught with public advantage and happiness—a mumbling of the dry bones of the Newcastle programme, or the assurance that both influenza and small-pox are contagious diseases, and that their spread from person to person can absolutely be checked by proper sanitary measures?

### SHORTHAND IN MEDICINE.

WE have been asked by Dr. Gowers to state that, in order to promote the use of shorthand by medical students and practitioners, by enabling them to increase their knowledge, at the same time, of the art and of their profession, a small sheet of Clinical Teaching in Lithographed Phonetic Shorthand has been Printed. It can be obtained, price 6d., post free, from Messrs. Sir I. Pitman and Sons, 1, Amen Corner, and is also sold by Mr. H. K. Lewis of Gower Street.

### BOYCOTTING THE NURSE.

BOARDS of Guardians seems just now to have an unenviable knack of getting into trouble, says the *St. James's Gazette*. According to the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, not usually an inaccurate authority, the Bedford Guardians have dismissed a qualified nurse, on the ground that she belongs to the "Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association," a philanthropic body under the presidency of the Princess Mary of Teck, which has in the last dozen years supplied over 500 highly-trained nurses to unions all over the kingdom. They might as well object to a medical officer because he was a Fellow of the College of Surgeons. Unless the Bedford Guardians can show a better cause than this, it is about time the Local Government Board turned their attention to a town which, with all its educational apparatus, appears to be deficient in the elements of common sense, at least in the selection of some of its guardians.

### LONDON AND MANCHESTER ASSURANCE COMPANY.

WE have received several further communications relative to this society.

Dr. Rotheroe confirms and points out some very objectionable features of this institution, on which we have often commented. We are sorry for the difficulties in which he has become involved in this matter, but are of opinion that anyone buying a practice in which there was an appointment of this nature with 1,300 members, might have foreseen pretty accurately what has in fact come to pass, while the action of the agents under the circumstances detailed can hardly be said to have been unnatural. That the management of the society, however, should practically be in such hands is much to be condemned, and affords another reason why medical men should be very cautious in accepting such appointments, as it may often happen that the injury done to their private practice by such an appointment will far outweigh the emoluments of the latter.

We quite agree with Dr. W. Woodley Stocker in condemning the practices he reports. Such action on the part of the agents is most improper, and cannot be too strongly condemned, and under the circumstances detailed the profits accruing to the practitioner must be meagre in the extreme.

It would appear that the agents of this society are under very little control, and act very differently in different localities, and only on this view can we understand their conduct, which is very differently described by individual correspondents. In reply to "Anti-Sweat" we can assure our correspondent that in most cases this society pays its medical officers quarterly by cheque from headquarters at a stated rate per quarter per member, so that agency commission cannot possibly reduce the amount in any way. The instances he refers to are probably due to improper behaviour on the part of the agents, though how they can have the power to act as our correspondent describes it is not easy to see.

As to our correspondent's views on the subject of the insurance of

infants, this is a big subject, and has been very much discussed, and we are of opinion that a good deal might be said against some of his propositions.

We must add that a slight error appears to have been made in saying that the quarterly lists of this society specifically state that 1s. per quarter is paid per member. We have recently seen a form of contract which we understand is usually signed by the medical referee, in which the amount to be paid by the society for each member is stated, but we notice that this is written in a space left in the form for that purpose, so that it would seem that the amounts paid to medical referees throughout the country are not uniform, and that special contracts are made with various practitioners. Under these circumstances we would advise all practitioners to refuse to accept less than the minimum of 1s. per quarter, which is miserable enough, especially when there can be no doubt that 1s. per quarter is paid in many cases by this society.

#### THE DECORATION OF HOSPITAL WARDS.

F. R. G.—In answer to an inquiry as to the treatment of the internal walls of hospital wards, of course a great deal depends on the material of which they are constructed; but if they are plastered there can be but little doubt that a hard oil paint, or paint coated with varnish, forms the best finish, as it can easily be dusted or washed. As regards colour that will depend to some extent on the amount of window space; where there is plenty of light one can afford to make the walls of such a tone as to be restful to the eyes; a very common defect in hospitals is making the walls too light. Ordinary hanging pictures are certainly inadmissible; if they were properly dusted, which they never are, they would be knocked to pieces in three months. If pictures are desired certain spaces should be reserved for the purpose, and the pictures should be pasted to the wall and varnished over. The same should be done with all tables of rules and regulations which one so often sees hanging on cards. They should all be pasted to the wall and varnished over, the object being that the wall and all upon it should be cleaned at one sweep.

#### TEMPERANCE DRINKS.

DR. WM. HARDMAN (Blackpool) writes: I quite agree with your praise and recommendation of ginger beer, that "in penny stone bottles" or "home made." It is a wholesome, invigorating beverage, and need not be indigestible if well fermented. Often it is bottled before fermentation is complete, and then it is liable to cause flatulence and acidity. Of course it contains alcohol in small but inappreciable amount. A spurious ginger beer is largely sold consisting of sugar, tartaric acid, carbonic acid, and a little tincture of ginger. In many places it is the only kind procurable, and is usually sold in glass bottles with press-in glass india-rubber stoppers. It is vile stuff, and is not ginger beer at all.

Have you ever tried nettle beer? It is a delicious and wholesome drink, and is made in much the same way as ginger beer, but using a strong infusion of nettles instead of water. In hot weather there are worse drinks than the favourite cockney beverage, a penny ice-cream in a glass of home-made ginger beer. I am glad you are taking this useful matter up. He who invents a good and palatable non-intoxicating drink will do more for the cause of temperance than all the teetotalers, with their repressive legislation, who have ever existed.

DR. HENRY TAYLOR (Guildford) writes: In a paragraph in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of July 28th, you lament the want of a "cheap, palatable, and popular teetotal beverage." And I agree with you in condemning most of the summer drinks now in use as being either unpalatable or sophisticated with alcohol. The lime-juice cordial is too often primed with salicylic acid to prevent fermentation, and moreover has not the flavour of the juice as obtained from the fresh fruit. Why then do we not borrow some of the beverages of our Continental neighbours, made with lemon or currant syrups, or the syrup of tamarinds so much used in Italy? These mixed with water, plain or gaseous, are more refreshing and wholesome than the bottled drinks sold at our refreshment bars, as well as being cheaper. Lastly, there is the soured milk that one meets with only in the north of England and in Norway one of the most refreshing and invigorating draughts for the tired traveller, and far more digestible than fresh milk. The taste for it is soon acquired, if the acetous fermentation is duly carried on at a low temperature and away from the light. I make a present of this suggestion to the advocates of total abstinence.

#### ON THE VENOMOUS BITES OF SOME KINDS OF GAD-FLIES.

SURGEON-GENERAL G. BIDIE (retired) (Glen Dochart) writes: I wish to place on record in your columns the venomous nature of the bites of some of the gad-flies, popularly known in the North as "clegs." I am at present residing in a deep, rugged glen in the south-west of Perthshire, traversed by a river, but having little cultivated land and but few trees; and I do not recollect having ever seen gad-flies so numerous and so aggressive in any other part of the Highlands. When walking along the public road as many as half a dozen may be found clinging to one's clothing, and if a sharp outlook be not kept two or three more will probably be busy blood-sucking about the head or the hands. Like mosquitoes, they are very insidious in their attacks, generally selecting some spot such as the back of the neck or under surface of the wrist, where they are not likely to be seen. The puncture of the skin by the cleg is done so quickly, and with such a small amount of uneasiness, as to render it likely to escape notice, and the subsequent act of sucking is also conducted so gently as to rarely attract attention. If the fly be killed at once, or shortly after the puncture of the skin, no bad effects follow, but if unmolesied it injects, as it sucks, a venom which causes a good deal of swelling and intense smarting like the stinging of nettles, with a considerable amount of local and even general irritation if the bites are numerous. These disagreeable effects always last for several days, and often for a week, and rubbing or scratching the bites, to allay the itching that ensues, does not do so, but causes a stinging sensation that seems to run along the nerves and induces general irritability. In my own case I have not found the application of ammonia of any use in preventing the bad effects of the bites; in fact, the only thing (at hand) that has given temporary relief

has been tincture of opium rubbed into the part. Perhaps some of your readers may be good enough to suggest a more efficient remedy. Being away from books of reference, it is difficult to say precisely to what species the fly belongs, but I believe it to be the Lesser Breeze fly (*Hæmatopota pluvialis*). The flies are about in all sorts of weather, but are most in evidence and most troublesome in sultry days and in showery days with blinks of sunshine. They do not seem to trouble the shaggy-haired Highland cattle much, but give great annoyance to the thinner-skinned dairy cows. So far as my observation goes, it is not the Breeze Flies that excite a stampede among cattle and horses, causing them to rush madly about. Such a panic seems to be due rather to the attacks and buzzing of the Warble or Bot-fly (*Hypoderma bovis*).

#### LETTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, Etc., have been received from:

(A) Mr. G. Adkins, Paignton; A. W. H.; W. C. Allardice, M.B., Macclesfield; A.; Messrs. Arnold and Sons, London; Messrs. Allan and Hanburys, London; Dr. R. G. Alexander, Bradford; Messrs. Armour and Co., London. (B) Mr. W. Berry, Wigan; Mr. A. B. Brewster, London; Mr. H. Blair, London; Mr. B. Bentley, Leicester; Dr. G. A. Buckmaster, Teddington; Mr. R. P. Brown, Perranporth; Mr. L. A. Bidwell, London; Dr. J. B. Brierley, Manchester; Bovinine Co., London. (C) Dr. J. Chiene, Edinburgh; Mr. E. Cotterell, London; Mr. E. Carnall, London; Constant Reader and Member; Mr. E. Caudwell, Harleston; Messrs. T. Christie and Co., London; Mr. K. Cameron, Montreal; Miss M. A. Cleaves, New York; Mr. H. H. Crickitt, Reading; Clubs are Trumps; Mr. S. Craddock, Bath; E. M. Cooke, M.B., Powick. (D) Mr. H. Downes, London; Mr. A. E. Davis, Gateshead; Mr. P. Drought, Crookwell; R. A. Dove, M.B., Brigg; Mr. T. V. de Denne, Cradley Heath. (E) Dr. F. Edge, Wolverhampton. (F) Dr. W. H. Fenton, London; F. G. P.; Mr. C. M. Fegen, London; Dr. W. Frazer, Bournemouth; Messrs Ferris and Co., Bristol; Dr. A. Frazer, Totnes. (G) Dr. W. T. Gardner, Bournemouth; Galen; Mr. T. H. Gibson, Kirky Stephen; G. H. B.; Dr. A. O. Grosvenor, London; Dr. B. Goff, Bothwell; W. T. Gardner, M.B., Bournemouth; Dr. H. R. Greene, Knaphill; Mr. T. Gilchrist, Omagh. (H) Mr. V. J. Hodgson, Sheerness; Mr. R. C. Holt, Burnley; House-Surgeon; Mr. R. Hartley, Thirsk; Messrs. C. J. Hewlett and Son, London; Dr. A. Hill, Wroughton; T. Handy, M.B., Probus; Mr. W. R. Huggard, Davos Platz; Mr. S. J. Hutchinson, Borth. (I) Inquirer; Dr. F. Isdell, London; Dr. C. R. Illingworth, London; Mr. F. G. Ingall, London. (K) Dr. L. Kidd, Enniskillen; Kennington; Dr. A. F. S. Kent, Salisbury. (L) Dr. J. Lynch, Walsall; Mr. J. Lawrence, London; Mr. A. Leche, Axbridge; E. Le C. Lancaster, M.B., Swansea; Mr. T. Leeds, London; Mr. H. Liston, Sunderland. (M) H. W. Maclure, M.B., London; W. H. Maidlow, M.B., London; Dr. G. L. Molloy, Blackpool; M.R.C.S.; M.D.; Messrs. Mayer and Meltzer, London; Mr. H. G. H. Monk, Scarborough; Mr. M. Marshall, Cambridge; Magnetic Filter Co., London; Mr. J. J. Mooney, Manchester; Mr. W. J. Morris, Portmadoc; Mr. S. C. H. Moberley, Warrington; Member, B.M.A. (N) Mr. H. Nestle, London; Dr. E. Neumann, Vienna; Dr. Van Niessen, Wiesbaden; Mr. W. G. Nash, Bedford. (O) Messrs. Oppenheimer, Son, and Co., London. (P) Rev. E. D. Pollock, Rhyl; Mr. H. E. Powell, London; Messrs. Pickard and Co., London; Mr. J. Parkes, London; Mr. H. G. Plimmer, Bristol; Mr. L. V. Parry, Holywell. (R) Mr. J. D. Reckitt, Dover; R.R.G.; Mr. J. Rogerson, London; A. Rennie, M.B., Hong Kong; R.M.; Mr. A. W. M. Robson, Leeds; Mr. J. Rothschild, Paris; Dr. J. Rowat, Highworth; Dr. W. B. Rotheroe, London. (S) Mr. W. Sammes, London; R. Stephens, M.B., Edinburgh; Dr. A. Stuart, Sydney; Mr. E. M. Swanwick, West Hartlepool; Dr. A. E. Sansom, London; Mr. J. Stewart, Clifton; Dr. J. F. Sutherland, Glasgow; Silicated Carbon Filter Co., London. (T) Dr. G. Thomson, Oldham; T. E. G.; Mr. G. W. Thomson, Lichfield; Mr. J. W. Taylor, Birmingham; Mrs. S. Theobald, Leicester; Mr. H. S. Thom, London; Dr. A. S. Taylor, Surbiton; T. R. B.; G. Turner, M.B., Broxbourne; Mr. J. Terry, Guildford. (V) Mr. A. B. Vesey, Magherafelt. (W) Mr. R. M. West, London; Dr. C. T. Williams, Vevey; Mr. F. H. Weekes, York; Mr. H. White, Manchester; Mr. H. U. Walker, Worksop; W. P., M.B.; Mr. A. Wright, Westport, N.Z.; Mr. G. S. A. Waylen, Devizes; D. Walsh, M.B., London. (Y) M. Young, M.B., Grange-over-Sands; etc.

#### BOOKS, Etc., RECEIVED.

On Puerperal Fevers. By Dr. Lovell Drage. London: Adlard and Son. 1894.

The Insane in Workhouses. By Dr. M. J. Nolan. Downpatrick: Down Recorder Office. 1894.

The Insanity of Over-Exertion of the Brain: being the Morison Lectures, delivered before the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Session 1894. By Dr. J. Batty Tuke. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. 1894. 6s.

Atlas of the Diseases of the Skin. By Dr. H. Radcliffe Crocker. Fasciculus V. London: Young J. Pentland. 21s.

\*.\* In forwarding books the publishers are requested to state the selling prices.